

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 32NEWSWEEK
7 FEBRUARY 1983

SOUTH AFRICA

**A Soviet 'Mole'
In the Shipyard?**

As the tall, handsome dockyard commander of the Simon's Town naval base in South Africa, Dieter Gerhardt was a highly visible and well-liked military official. But he may have been leading a double life. Last week the government charged Gerhardt and his wife, Ruth, with espionage—claiming that they were “working in the interests of” the Soviet Union. Sources said there might soon be related arrests in Western Europe—and that the alleged agents are all directed by the KGB station in Switzerland.

For the Western intelligence community, the damage in South Africa alone might be considerable. Warships and reconnaissance planes operating out of Simon's Town and nearby bases closely monitor Soviet naval movements around the Cape of Good Hope, also the route used by many of the West's oil-tankers. A “mole” at the base would be able to tell the Soviets what the West knows about their ship movements and could even have access to secret NATO plans to utilize Simon's Town in wartime. “He was a nice guy and a pleasure to work with,” one colleague said of Gerhardt. Maybe so, but his arrest left intelligence networks in South Africa in a state of decided discomfort.